

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of operating a guide system comprising:
2 storing data representative of a plurality of media shows in a
3 computer readable memory;
4 inputting a user selection for selectively controlling whether a guide
5 is displayed over substantially all of a screen or partially overlaid over a current
6 television show to which a television receiver is tuned; and
7 selectively displaying a media guide based on said stored data over
8 substantially all of said screen or as an overlay to a current television show based
9 on said user selection.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of selecting
2 one of said plurality of media shows, said selecting step performed by a user of said
3 guide system.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said media shows are
2 television shows.

1 4. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of selecting
2 a portion of said plurality of television shows, said selecting step performed by a
3 system operator of said television schedule system based on a selection criteria input
4 by a user.

1 5. The method of claim 4 wherein said selection criteria is
2 television show popularity.

1 6. The method of claim 3 wherein said plurality of television
2 shows are television shows presently available for viewing.

1 7. The method of claim 3 wherein said plurality of channels is
2 less than a total number of channels over which programs are received by said
3 television system.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein said predetermined period of
2 time is approximately 3 minutes.

1 10. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of visually
2 distinguishing current television shows from future television shows.

1 11. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of visually
2 distinguishing television shows according to their subject matter.

1 12. The method of claim 3 wherein information displayed within
2 said media guide may not be manipulated by a user.

1 13. A computer program product comprising:
2 computer readable code that inputs media program schedule
3 information, said schedule information comprising at least program information and
4 times;
5 computer readable code that selectively displays said media program
6 schedule information over substantially all of a screen or partially overlaid over a
7 current television show to which a television receiver is tuned; and
8 tangible media that store the computer readable code.

1 14. The computer program product as recited in claim 13 wherein
2 said media shows are television shows.

1 15. The computer program product as recited in claim 13 wherein
2 said media program schedule information is updated every half hour a few minutes
3 before the half hour.

1 17. A method of generating a media guide in a user display
2 comprising:

1 18. The method recited in claim 17 wherein said optimal service is
2 provided through acquisition and use of a plug-in module.

1 19. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of
2 selecting said plurality of channels, said selecting step performed by a user.

1 20. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of
2 selecting said plurality of channels, said selecting step performed by a system
3 operator based on a selection criteria.

1 21. The method of claim 20 wherein said selection criteria is
2 channel popularity.

1 22. The method of claim 17 wherein said plurality of channels are
2 channels presently available for viewing.

1 23. The method of claim 22 wherein said guide information for
2 programs are available for a predetermined period of time prior to said availability
3 of said programs on said plurality of channels.

1 24. The method of claim 23 wherein said predetermined period of
2 time is approximately 3 minutes.

1 25. A method of displaying media guide information comprising:
2 displaying a plurality of current playing and future playing media
3 guide listings; and
4 visually distinguishing those listings that are currently playing from
5 future play listings with at least one visually distinguishing feature.

1 26. The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of
2 selecting said first plurality of media guide listings, said selecting step performed by
3 a user.

1 27. The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of
2 selecting said first plurality of media guide listings, said selecting step performed by
3 a system operator based on a selection criteria.

1 28. The method of claim 27 wherein said selection criteria is
2 television guide listing popularity.

1 29. A media schedule system for displaying VCR programming
2 guide information, said system comprising:
3 a data processor;
4 a switching mechanism coupled to said data processor for activating
5 and suspending operation of said VCR programming guide information system; and
6 a display generator coupled to said data processor for generating a
7 display containing said VCR programming guide information, wherein said display
8 contains a grid of time segments and channel numbers of which a plurality of times
9 and/or channels can be selected can be chosen for programming a VCR.

1 30. The media schedule system of claim 29 wherein a user may
2 choose a channel number by entering the channel number.

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